

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 A-01 OPR-02 SY-10

OC-06 CCO-00 AID-20 PC-10 DRC-01 IO-14 /170 W

----- 034340

O P 0705Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3748

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MBABANE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 0031

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS LT

SUBJ: POLICE POSTS ATTACKED

REF : MASERU 0026

1. GOL PUBLICIZED ATTACKS ON POLICE POSTS REPORTED REFTEL VIA RADIO LESOTHO EARLY AFTERNOON REGULAR NEWS BROADCAST. ATTACKS DESCRIBED AS COORDINATED AND ATTRIBUTED TO BCP WITHOUT SUBSTANTIATION. ATTACKERS SAID TO HAVE FLED TO SOUTH AFRICA. LESOTHO POLICE ON ALERT. PRIME MINISTER HAS CALLED CAB*NET INTO ADDITIONAL SESSION THIS AFTERNOON.

2. SABC TREATED EVENTS MORE LURIDLY, CITING FOUR POLICE POSTS ATTACKED AND REPORTING ONE ATTACKER KILLED AND TWO POLICE WOUNDED. SAID ROADBLOCKS OUTSIDE MASERU CHECKING ALL TRAFFIC AND MASERU POLICE INSTALLATIONS UNDER HEAVY GUARD. EMBASSY SURVEY AFTERNOON JAN 7 INDICATES NO ROADBLOCKS OR OTHER OUTWARD SIGNS OF TENSION AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS OR OTHER FACILITIES IN MASERU. HOWEVER, SOME PC AND OTHER AMCIT TRAVELERS

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REPORT HAVING BEEN STOPPED AND SEARCHED EVENING JAN 6 AND MORNING JAN 7.

3. RADIO LESOTHO ALSO CARRIED DISCLOSURE OF ADDITIONAL INCIDENT ALLEGED TO HAVE OCCURRED JAN 5 WHEN CAR CONTAINING THREE BASOTHO WITH TRANSVAAL REGISTRATION STOPPED INSIDE LESOTHO. IT SAID TO HAVE CONTAINED CONSIDERABLE QUANTITY OF EXPLOSIVES AND LETTER RELATING TO THEIR PURCHASE. RADIO REPORTED POLICE THINK PART OF MASSIVE PLOT TO OVERTHROW GOVERNMENT. TWO OF THREE BASOTHO ARRESTED AND ALL PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED BUT NOT KNOWN TO EMBASSY. THIRD STILL AT LARGE.

4. SABC REPORTING ON THIS INCIDENT AGAIN MORE SENSATIONAL WITH STORY THAT AROUND GNT BASOTHO ARRESTED AFTER EXPLOSIVES SEIZED. (WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF THIS.) SABC ALSO NOTED BCP LEADER MOKHEHLE ABSENT FOR PAST THREE WEEKS. THIS LATER CONFIRMED BY MINISTER OF INTERIOR.

5. CHARGE PAID FAREWELL CALL ON MINISTER OF INTERIOR LATE AFTERNOON JAN 7. HE CONFIRMED REPORT OF RAID ON THREE POLICE POSTS AND SAID ONE POLICEMAN KILLED. MINISTER STATED PM HAD RETURNED TO HOME IN KOLONIYAMA (SCENE OF ONE OF POLICE POST ATTACKS) AND THAT GOL HAD NO RPT NO INTENTION DECLARE STATE OF EMERGENCY. RATHER INTENDED SIMPLY APPREHEND CRIMINALS AND BRING TO TRIAL. HE SAID THERE FURTHER OUTBREAK AT MAPOTENG MORNING JAN 7 IN WHICH FOUR BCP MEMBERS KILLED.

6. COMMENT: GOVERNMENT DID NOT DIRECTLY LINK ATTACKS ON POLICE POSTS AND EXPLOSIVES INCIDENT IN BROADCAST BUT PRESENTATION LEFT NO DOUBT THEY ARE BEING LOOKED AT AS MANIFESTATIONS OF A SINGLE THREAT. ALTHOUGH REACTION THUS FAR PRETTY LOW-KEY, ATTRIBUTION TO BCP IN ONE INSTANCE AND DESIGNATION OF ZMAS-SIVE PLOT" IN OTHER COULD PROVIDE RATIONALE FOR STATE OF EMERGENCY.
FRISBIE

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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